



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Memphis District

News Release

Release No.

PA-04-01

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Shelby County, Chickasaw Basin Authority and Corps of Engineers to sign Wolf River restoration agreement

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Jan. 9, 2004 – A project cooperation agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Shelby County and the Chickasaw Basin Authority will result in construction of a nearly \$10 million environmental restoration project on the Wolf River. The parties will sign the PCA Jan. 14 at 9 a.m. in the 8th floor conference room of the Shelby County Building at 160 N. Main St., Memphis. Shelby County Mayor A C Wharton, Jr., will sign on behalf of the county. Chairman Charles Perkins will sign for the Chickasaw Basin Authority and Memphis District Commander Col. Jack V. Scherer will sign for the Corps of Engineers.

“I’m told that this is one of only two projects like this in the nation,” Mayor Wharton said. “This has been at least 12 years in the making, and is very much a community effort. This project has the potential to create the second largest recreational area in the county, exceeded in size only by Shelby Farms.”

The Corps’ Memphis District Engineer Col. Jack V. Scherer echoed the mayor’s sentiments. “This type of project is unique for this part of the country,” he said. “It will provide valuable benefits to the environment and existing public infrastructure along the 9-mile river stretch between Houston Levee Road and Collierville-Arlington Road.”

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WOLF RIVER/2-2-2-2

The restoration project includes six main channel stabilization weirs, 18 tributary channel weirs and two earthen berms. The weirs will help stabilize and protect the river channel from scour and caving banks. Recreational benefits planned for the project include a 2,000-acre wildlife corridor, biking and hiking trails and three boat ramps. These improvements are expected to produce more than \$400,000 each year in environmental and recreational benefits.

An essential part of the restoration project provides for approximately eight miles of walking and hiking trails. Mayor Wharton said this supports one of the county's comprehensive greenways system goals of establishing a trail that stretches from Fayette County to the Mississippi River.

Mayor Wharton also applauded the cooperative efforts that have gone into creating the restoration project. "I'd especially like to recognize the efforts of Charles Perkins and the Chickasaw Basin Authority, the Wolf River Conservancy and the Town of Collierville for their help in getting us to this point."

The Wolf River is located in Hardeman, Fayette, and Shelby Counties, Tenn., and Tippah, Marshall, and Benton Counties, Miss.

Prior improvements and commercial mining in the river have caused instabilities resulting in bank and channel bed erosion and drainage of valuable wetland and habitat areas.

The first contract award is scheduled for this summer and calls for construction of three stabilization weirs, two cutoff prevention berms and associated access roads.